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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 720  
By Cohen

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Molly Todd, volunteer activist of Nashville.

WHEREAS, it was with great sadness and a profound sense of loss that the members of this General Assembly and the citizens of Tennessee learned of the passing of Mary “Molly” Kimball Massie Todd, who was truly a champion for all that is right and good in our society; and

WHEREAS, a longtime Nashville community leader, Molly Todd was involved in the civil rights movement in that fair city during the early 1960s; she even participated in a civil rights protest at Harvey’s Department Store where her husband, James Todd, was a store executive; and

WHEREAS, a fearless and determined social activist during her 93 incredible years on this earth, Molly Todd was born in New York and educated at Vassar College; and

WHEREAS, she longed to be a doctor, but because of the sexual discrimination of her time, she became a social worker instead; and

WHEREAS, Molly Kimball was employed as a New York City social worker when she met and married Robert Massie; their two sons were only toddlers when Mr. Massie died of cancer some two years later; and

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WHEREAS, six years later, Molly was working in New Jersey at a family services agency when she married James Todd; in 1939, they moved their family to Nashville, where he would manage Harvey's Department Store; and

WHEREAS, Molly Todd wasted no time in making her mark on Nashville; and

WHEREAS, she was instrumental in reactivating the Nashville Chapter of the League of Women Voters, and was subsequently elected as the Chapter's president; and

WHEREAS, Molly Todd once told reporters: "If you believe something is unfair, it is your responsibility to do something about it. It is your duty"; and

WHEREAS, she clearly lived her philosophy as she fought successfully to abolish the poll tax; and

WHEREAS, she also campaigned faithfully for the passage of metropolitan government in Nashville and advocated the creation of a Better Business Bureau; and

WHEREAS, she was actively involved in the formation of the Tennessee Council of Human Relations and Planned Parenthood; and

WHEREAS, she was also a plaintiff in the landmark Baker v. Carr case, which resulted in the United States Supreme Court establishing the "one-man, one-vote" rule, thus forcing states to regularly reapportion legislative districts according to population; and

WHEREAS, a true individualist, who championed causes that were not politically correct at the time, Molly Todd also steadfastly supported psychiatric care for children and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons; and

WHEREAS, Molly Todd was also the first woman to serve on a jury in a capital murder case in Tennessee, serving proudly despite her husband's objections that she would miss the holidays; and

WHEREAS, the many honors and accolades she received during her lifetime are too numerous to mention; and

WHEREAS, she received one very special award in 1987, when a coalition of five groups, the ACLU, the Jewish Federation, the NAACP, the National Conference of Christians and Jews and the Urban League, honored her for her extraordinary work in civil rights; and

WHEREAS, Molly Todd's estimable legacy of service to the greater good lives on in the awards that have been named for her: The Molly Todd Cup, which is given annually by the CABLE organization of the YWCA for commitment to women's advocacy, and the Molly Todd Award for Service to Voters, which is given by the League of Women Voters; and

WHEREAS, as a fierce, yet compassionate social activist, she possessed the strength and determination to do whatever she needed to do to make her point; and

WHEREAS, Molly Todd inspired and empowered a generation of young people, particularly women, to have the wisdom to recognize injustice and the courage to fight it, and she did all this with great grace and humor; and

WHEREAS, this exceptional lady is survived by her three sons, Jim Todd of Nashville, Robert K. Massie of Irvington, New York, who is a noted author and scholar who received the Pulitzer Prize for the historical biography, *Peter the Great*, and Kim Massie of Accord, New York; and eleven grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, during the course of her vibrant and productive career, Molly Todd established a peerless model of good citizenship and proficient community leadership that present and future generations would do well to emulate, and her life of purpose and commitment to others should be appropriately commemorated; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we hereby pause to honor the memory of Molly Todd, reflecting fondly upon her indelible legacy of diligent social activism and selfless service to the poor, disenfranchised and oppressed citizens of Nashville and Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we tender our condolences and deepest sympathy to the family and many friends of Molly Todd.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.